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Action Programme for Latin America

- RESIST THE NEO-LIBERAL OFFENSIVE!
- DEFEND AND EXTEND DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS!
- FOR A SOCIALIST FEDERATION OF WORKERS' REPUBLICS!
- FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY AND INTERNATIONAL!

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doomed to repeat it**

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The third issue (March 1993) contains an exchange over the Trotskyist Manifesto and an account of the experience of French Trotskyists work in the SFIO in the 1930s



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Latin American Action Programme

From defensive action to the seizure of power. make the revolution permanent!

Since the end of the 1980s governments committed to neo-liberal programmes have swept to power; in seeking to impose them they have everywhere met with resistance. But the bankruptcy of leftist and nationalist parties in office together with the ideological effect of the collapse of Stalinism have put the labour and popular movements of Latin America on the ideological, political and economic defensive. While in certain countries (e.g. Brazil, Bolivia, Uruguay) this reactionary neo-liberal offensive has been delayed or thwarted from achieving its full aims, the results so far in many countries have—through the effects of mass unemployment and real wage reductions and in some countries through continued murderous repression—placed the mass organisations on the defensive. The growth of the informal sector, the decline of large scale production in several countries is a setback for the working class.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s the mass movements in LA developed strong unions and general strikes. Several dictatorships were thrown out. In Nicaragua there was a revolution and significant guerrilla movements emerged in Central America and the northern Andes. In Brazil the huge workers' movement developed a series of strikes and a new party.

But since the late 1980s, and especially in the 1990s, the neo-liberal reaction took the offensive. In the majority of the countries unionisation levels decreased and the bureaucrats became stronger. At the end of the 1980s the last dictatorships in South America (Chile and Paraguay) were phased out without a revolution, but in a process that allowed the reconstitution of the workers' movement. In Brazil and Venezuela the combination of mass discontent and demonstrations and the necessity of the ruling class to eliminate extreme corruption resulted in the impeachment of two presidents. In Uruguay the privatisation programme was undermined by a referendum. In Nicaragua there is still serious resistance to neo-liberalism.

But even in the most radical mass demonstrations of the 1990s the level of consciousness and organization is not as strong as it was a decade ago.

In some countries severe defeats have occurred from which the workers have not recovered (Peru); in some the workers have been put into serious retreat (e.g. Argentina, Colombia, Mexico). In some the watershed struggles lay ahead in the immediate future (Brazil, Venezuela, Guyana). In still others there has been a recovery from historic defeats which have restructured and created a new working class, but previous levels of combativity and class consciousness not been attained (Chile).

Through this uneven pattern one thing stands out; we need to regroup the working class initially around defensive demands, with the aim of preparing a new offensive the bitter lessons learned in the last five years need to be assimilated in those countries which still stand before their greatest challenge.

Turn back the tide of militarised democracy and neo-liberalism

End the neo-liberal hurricane against the working class!

- Down with imperialist domination of the economy; no submission to IMF austerity programmes; break with the World Bank and IMF, expel their representatives; repudiate all debts and interest payments to imperialism; Not a penny to the imperialist plunders; restore previous payments and restore natural resources; nationalise without compensation all foreign MNC holdings and bank accounts; cancel all special arrangements and joint ventures

- Immediate scrapping of all privatisation programmes; no joint ventures with imperialist capital; for 100% state ownership of the big industries and commerce. under workers control. Re-nationalise all companies privatised without compensation and place under workers control; state indemnity for small savers forced to take shares by the state; investment funds to be taken from the capital presently given over in the form of interest payments to the banks and from expropriating the wealth of the rich.

- For the expropriation of all Latin American and foreign monopolies and multi-nationals; For state ownership and workers control of the food, clothes and medicine monopolies.

- For all companies, especially those in crisis, we demand they open the books of the business so that workers can determine the truth and have all the information necessary to advance a solution; for strikes against redundancies; for occupations against closures and mass sackings; no to joint responsibility for the crisis of a firm, no to workers joint management or self-management, which leads to the disaster of self-exploitation; for nationalisation under workers' control of all companies and especially all bankrupt companies

Defend and extend democratic rights !

In countries such as Peru after Fujimori self-inflicted coup bourgeois democracy is a big leaf which covers an increasingly military regime. While bourgeois democracy always

reliues on the military in the last instance and in unstable semi-colonial demopcracies their presence is always much more visible and influential in the operation of government than is normal in imperialist countries, in several countries in Latin America, such as Colombia, Peru and El Salvador, it is necessary to raise specific demands against the blatant trampling on supposedly upheld democratic norms. Whether a president or other key government member attempts a Fujimori-style self-inflicted coup, as in Guatemala, or the masses are simply faced with a "normally" repressive and corrupt "democratic" government we demand the defence and extension of democratic rights and freedoms and mobilise with the workers and popular masses around the following programme.

- For the right to vote for all those at work regardless of age and sex and for all those over 16 not at work; against compulsory voting forced upon the people by the state; for literacy campaigns under the control of the workers' organisations to stop manipulation by populists and demagogues and religious obscurantists.

- For workers and poor peasant control over the mass media; for nationalisation of the media and democratic free access to radio, TV and press for trade union and community organisations and parties of the working class.

- For an end to manipulation of election results; end external financing for bourgeois parties; state financial assistance for popular organisations; put the process under the control of the popular organisations; Down with bonapartist referendums and plebiscites. For the right of popular initiative and referenda only.

- Guarantees for the safe and free exercise of the democratic rights of opposition groups before and after elections; for an end to political intimidation and assassination of opposition candidates and supporters; fort he right of self-defence of opposition groups to protect themselves in election campaigns.

- Root out all corrupt officials and politicians; end graft and paybacks; for workers' inspection of corruption charges; all MPs to be recallable and put onto workers' wages.

- For the right to form trade unions, to fund them and political parties based on them; end all restrictive qualifications for standing in elections; no threshold of votes for parliamentary representation.

- End all repressive legislation; disband the special squads against the people; abolish the state of siege; end curfews; no special courts for the military; no amnesty for crimes of the military.

- Release all political prisoners of the labour, anti-imperialist, and popular movements; end the repression against all bourgeois or petit bourgeois democratic forces in the bourgeois states;

- Expel all imperialism's armed forces, military bases, advisers and narcotic agents from the region.

Rebuild the fighting strength of the workers and popular organisations

- For trade unions of the wage labourers in every workplace; for the unionisation of workers and self employed in the informal sector.

- For one unified national trade union for each industry; for a unified national federation of all the trade unions under the democratic control of the rank and file; for officials of the union to be elected by rank and file members of the union; to be instantly recallable and accountable to those who elected them and to receive no more than the average wage of the workers they represent.

- For a massive unionisation drive to organise women based on the struggle for equal pay, conditions and state/ employer provision of free child care. For the right of women to organise separate meetings within the unions if they wish, to overcome obstacles to their full participation. The unions must carry out special work to recruit and mobilise women workers.

- The trade union should bring ethnic groups closer to the trade union and labour movement by struggling for an end to all racial and ethnic discrimination in the workplace; the trade unions must integrate them into the struggle for caucuses of the oppressed in the trade unions at all levels.; for the free movement of workers across borders; full rights to immigrant labourers and seasonal workers.

- For militant direct action to resist the neo-liberal hurricane; for mass strikes, occupations; for general strikes under the control of mass assemblies against privatisation programmes, erosion of democratic rights, "concertacion social" pacts—and anti-labour legislation; for solidarity with other workers in struggle

- For a systematic application of the united front tactic; for common action in defence of workers demands; march separately strike together; no to popular front alliances with sectors of the bourgeoisie which subordinates the aims of the masses to the narrow class interests of the bosses, the imperialists and their parties.

- For a mass movement of working class and poor women based on those organised in unions, in community and shanty towns, mothers' organisations that are independent of the state, and in the countryside.

- For rank and file elected factory committees, strike committees and councils of action drawing together the unions, and the popular organisations; for workers defence militia under the control of mass assemblies, to protect the workers struggles from attack by state squads, private armies, mafia thugs and guerrilla assassinations of popular leaders.

- For workers and peasants to organise their own armed self-defense groups independently of all state forces, to defend themselves from the army, police and narcotraffickers. Where guerrilla groups exist in "liberated zones" these self-defence groups should struggle to win such groups to fight under the discipline of workers' and peasants' democracy, not as elite squads separate from and uncontrolled by the local popular organisations.

- Resist all repressive actions of these groups which are directed at any section, especially the oppressed sections, of the working class and poor peasantry while defending them from state repression; only the genuine organisations of the workers and peasants have the right to exercise justice in their communities.

For jobs, a living wage and decent working conditions

- For a legal minimum wage at a rate that guarantees a full basket of basic goods for the family, as decided upon by rank and file committees of workers and housewives

- Against inflation we fight for a sliding scale of wages; against hyper inflation we raise the demand for the expropriation of the banks and the printing presses under workers' control; pensions to be indexed against inflation; state system (funded by taxation against the bosses) of universal benefits; For workers' and peasants' committees to control prices and distribution of food and other necessities. Direct exchange of products between the countryside and the cities under control of workers', peasants' and housewives' committees. For workers control of rationing and distribution of basic necessities.

- For free national collective bargaining; defend the system of national centralised pay contracts against the governments attempts to rip them up; defend full-time contracts; hands off the pension funds of the trade unions, put them under democratic control of the union members.

- For a sliding scale of working hours against unemployment. Work or full pay! Divide the hours by the workers with no loss of pay under workers' control; for a fighting movement of the unemployed. Against the bosses attempts to increase the hours to more than 8 hours a day (as in Argentina and other countries). For a legally enforced

maximum working week of 35 hours.

- No repression or exploitation by the state or the police of the informal sector. For the legalisation of all activities that do not violate the protective legislation necessary for the workers. Informal sector micro-enterprises should pay the living wage to their workers, provide health and safety cover and protection, and trade union recognition.

- We demand that the state should finance public works, with secure and decent pay, and to provide vocational training under the control of the workers, the unions and the pobladores at full rates and with guaranteed job at the end.

- For workers' control of all health and safety at work measures with the right for factory committees to shut down unsafe premises on full pay.

Force the state to provide for the welfare of the people

Against urban squalor and for houses in a good inhabitable conditions for workers!

- Free association of shanty town dwellers, without state or governmental control.

- For a programme of public works under the control of the pobladores and the unions for building houses, hospital, schools and amenities to be paid for out of taxing the rich and refusing to pay the external debt.

- To solve the housing crisis the homeless must occupy unused land; expropriate the bourgeoisie's buildings and the unused big estates for building programmes.

- Pobladores, workers and tenants should decide how much should be paid in rent to commercial landlords, according to their earnings and cost of living; for a fair rent for tenants in workers' houses, to be decided by community organisations.

- For full industrial insurance, social security, unemployment benefit and free legal representation for all workers—employed, unemployed or underemployed, paid for out of taxation on company profits..

- For universal state pensions to those retired from work.

- For free state funded health provision for the people.

- The state, should finance and provide free education and vocational training programmes to improve the skills of members of the informal sector.

- For the nationalisation and expropriation of big bus and truck companies without compensation, and under workers' control; for co-operatives of small urban transport owners with state technical assistance and guaranteed maximum eight hour days for those employed For free access to urban public transport!

- For land and rights for native, black and oppressed peoples and for their right to self-determination!

- For public laundries, baths, and popular canteens provided by the state under the control of the workers and the pobladores;

- For free movement without passports and visas; no taxation on travel inside and between countries.

Defend the environment against multinational capitalism

- For workers' control of dangerous plants and processes; for workers inspection of dangerous plants and common action and control by workers and committees of the local community where the danger extends beyond the plant!

- No to imperialist multi-nationals foisting their obsolete and dangerous factories, machines and power generators onto the semi-colonial countries

- Halt the plunder of natural resources by the imperialist companies.

- Halt the destruction of the rain forest, no destruction of renewable resources without workers', peasants' and indigenous toilers' control over their renewal.

- For state resources to be provided to allow indigenous peoples to work in their own lands, For a system of Soviet-type committees of the indigenous peoples to organise defence of their communities from colonists and big landowners, for land rights and royalties for natural resources which are exploited in their territories.

- For a programme of public works in the cities to provide alternative employment for land settlers and gold seekers

- For a centralised plan under workers and poor control that manages the exploitation of all natural resources

For agrarian revolution

- Confiscation of the land and all means of production from the great landowners, imperialist plantations and agribusinesses without compensation; The rural workers, the poor and middle peasants must democratically decide how the land shall be worked, whether the large estates shall be divided and worked communally or cooperatively.

- For a system of voluntary national agricultural plans worked out and organised under workers' and poor peasants' control to develop crop diversification and eliminate the imbalances created by monoculture and agribusiness, using economic incentives for small, middle and collective farmers and state coercion for bigger agricultural enterprises.

- Abolition of onerous taxation on the middle and poor peasant; for interest free credit, for fertilisers and equipment for them; for guaranteed purchase of small farmers produce by the state at prices fixed by workers and small farmer committees.

- For agricultural schools in the countryside. For agricultural depots to be established in all rural areas to loan, repair and provide training on modern agricultural equipment and with new technology etc, for poor and middle peasants and collective farmers.

- For the right of permanent contracts to seasonal labour; for the right to join a trade union; for self defence against landowners thugs.

- Expropriate without compensation all the property of the big narco-traffickers and cartels; for industrialisation of coca processing by the state under workers' control.

- For the right to cultivate narcotic related crops and the purchase of such crops at prices fixed by workers' and peasant committees; for self-defence against army and imperialist advisers' crop eradication programmes; de-criminalise and legalise the use of drugs; for self defence against the drug cartels and repression;

- For a programme of public works to improve the conditions of the masses of the countryside (electrification, canalisation, water supply, roads, transport, hospital, schools and amenities) under workers' and peasants' control and financed by the state and through debt repudiation.

No to racism and national oppression

- No to discrimination, persecution and genocide against the indian, black and other ethnic communities of our continent; for the self-determination of all the oppressed peoples up to and including separation; For the right of indian and black people to use their own language in public life. For the right to be educated and tried in their own language; for the indian and creole languages to be official languages in those areas where they are spoken by a considerable proportion of the population. For the right of indian and black people to work their own land free from the intrigues and pressure of multi-national capital.

- In Latin America and the Caribbean the imperialist penetration has created a big difference between regions to the benefit of the cities where the elites live. We support the right of the oppressed and marginalised regions to receive

funds for development and creation of roads, universities, etc., and for royalties to their natural resources. These funds should be derived from the imperialism and by cancelling the external debt and should be administered under workers' and peasants' control. We don't support reactionary regional aims like "free zones" or promoting privileges to the detriment of other regions. In the regional mobilisations we could participate critically and we will try to develop in such actions independent workers and peasants committees or councils.

Open the road to women workers

For the workers and poor peasants to be successful in the fight against the imperialists and the bourgeoisie women must be central to the organisations of struggle and the specific demands of women must be fought for by the whole revolutionary movement. There can be no "waiting until after the revolution" to take up the demands of women.

- We demand full legal and political rights for women, including the right to vote, without any literacy clauses, the right to stand for election and hold office, and full equal rights in law. For free union of couples of either sex and for their equality with married couples in the eyes of the law. Women must have equal property and inheritance rights to men, and the right to free and quick divorce and separation with no discrimination in distribution of property and money between couples. No legal discrimination against illegitimate children. For a full system of social benefits and for child care provision.

- Women must have equal pay for work of equal value, and equal rights to protection at work. For maternity leave on full pay, and the right to paternity leave for fathers. Women who are out of work must be eligible for full benefits.

- For the decriminalisation of prostitution; for free, comprehensive access to medical treatment; for free contraception; for the right to organise themselves in co-operatives free from the oppression of pimps and the state. For full trade union rights and labour protection equal to all sections of workers.

- For free and good quality childcare funded by the state but run by parents and child-care workers to allow women to take a full part in employment and other social activities. For adequate child benefits.

- For the free provision of safe contraception and abortion on demand for all women, alongside good quality maternity care to enable women to choose whether and when to have children. Against the forced sterilisation of women, and against women being used as guinea pigs for new contraceptives by the imperialist laboratories. For universal sex education in schools, polytechnics and universities on a secular basis and in a way that does not discriminate against homosexuality, and the provision of condoms for prevention of pregnancy and or sexually transmitted diseases such as AIDS. For a major campaign of universal secular sex education and birth control instruction for all in the town and country.

- For a campaign in the workers' and poor peasants' movement against machismo and violence against women. For women to be drawn into struggle alongside men, men will have to learn to treat women as equals. Domestic violence and sexual abuse must be vilified by the workers' movement. For trade unions and popular organisations to establish secure hostels for battered and abused or raped women, with therapy and counselling services, paid for by the state.

- Women in domestic service and other informal sectors must have the same labour protection as other workers. To achieve this they must be organised into unions who fight for their pay and conditions.

In fighting for all these demands women need to be organised in workers' parties, trade unions and in organisations of poor peasants and urban poor. In all these organisations and representative bodies women should have the right to caucus and have guaranteed representation on all levels of leader-

ship. Women have to fight for their right to be heard in these organisations. Therefore we fight for a proletarian based women's movement.

The youth are the flame of the revolution!

- Equal access to paid work for the youth; for the same employment rights, benefits and insurance as adults; free access to recreational facilities; end the private and business use of beaches and swimming areas; free access to public transport.

- For full freedom of cultural and artistic expression for the youth without fear of repression; for TV, radio and press facilities to be set aside for the youth.

- For a system of grants and allowances to ensure that all children can afford to attend school from the age of 5 to the age of 16 and for no children under 16 to have to work. For the right of children to attend school against their parents wishes with special secure hostels provided for abandoned children and those who wish to live separately from their parents.

- Down with the intervention of the state and the church into the private and sexual life of the youth; against sexual abuse; for free supplies of contraception and free access to abortion; no harassment and prosecution of the youth for drug use; legalise the use of drugs. For detoxification centres and advice

- For an end to state genocide against street children; for secure hostels and voluntary education or non-exploitative useful work with full labour protection and trade union rights at the expense of the state.

- Free and secure hostels for the youth to provide independence from the family; end all discrimination against children from non-married unions.

- For a secular, free, universal, polytechnical and scientific education for the youth; abolish compulsory religious education courses; nationalise the universities and large private colleges.

- For an end to conscription; no prosecution for those who refuse to serve; for full political and trade union rights for conscripts.

- Against child labour. The child labourers should have the right to unionise. For free education to all homeless children.

Against religious obscurantism

The majority of the world's Catholics are in Latin America. Whilst some priests have often played a courageous role in establishing and sustaining popular and trade union organisations in Central America, the Catholic Church is a reactionary pro-capitalist and private property institution. In the last analysis whilst it must express sympathy with the anguish of the oppressed masses it supports the maintenance of the oppressor state which oversees the conditions under which exploitation and oppression flourish.

Just as insidious is the US sponsored growth of evangelical sects throughout the region which preach a philosophy of protestant conservative compliance with the existing order and promote support for pro-imperialist policies.

Revolutionaries also reject the indigenist and black religions and myths, whilst opposing all state restrictions against them. They are also poisoning the consciousness of the oppressed and exploited masses, tying their courage and resistance to utopias and to the aims of petit bourgeois and small bourgeois leaders.

- For the separation of church and state! No financial support for the church from the state or from foreign religious organisations, no church teachings in state schools or access to state media.

- For religious tolerance and against religious persecution by the state against minority or indigenist and black religions.

For active internationalism

Active internationalism begins with a struggle against the nationalist policies of the regions' bourgeoisies. Calls for protectionism have grown in response to the neo-liberal "common market" policies of many of the regions' governments (e.g. Mercosur). But if removing trade barriers will cause the loss of jobs at the hands of the free market, then under capitalism jobs will perish if the market for national goods is restricted within the boundaries of impoverished Latin American national markets. The answer to free trade is not protectionism which would benefit one sector of the bosses against another, but the expropriation of capitalism and the establishment of a monopoly of foreign trade.

- The desperate petty rulers of the continent constantly seek to divert the anger of the masses onto the neighbouring states. The promotion of border disputes, the claim for "historic territories" are designed to promote divisions between the workers of neighbouring countries and prevent fighting unity against the state and multi-nationals; we reject siding with one pro-imperialist national bourgeois class and their governments in clashes and claims against each other for territory or reparations.

- Expell the colonial powers from Puerto Rico, the Panama Canal, french Guyana and the Antiles and Atlantic islands.

- The false god of Stalinism has collapsed in the the USSR and Europe, but with it is threatened the post capitalist conquests; in Latin America the Cuban revolution grew over into a Stalinist counter-revolution and creation of a degenerate workers' state, the only one in the region. Now the Cuban state and its people are the victims of a ruthless blockade orchestrated by US imperialism; the people refuse to give in since they understand that what is at stake is their education, health and welfare entitlements. Yet the conciliationist and pro-capitalist policies of the Castro regime threaten to undermine all that exists. The workers and oppressed of Latin America must do all they can to end the isolation and blockade of Cuba, to break the alliance that binds their governments with the policy of the Clinton government. If Castro's policies succeed in fatally undermining the Cuban workers' state and lead to its overthrow then this blow will be felt throughout the Latin American continent. We need to defend the Cuban revolution's conquests; the health and education system and the planned and nationalise economy. We should oppose the concessions that Castro is making to imperialism (mixed companies with -and controlled by multinationals- without rights for the workers, tourism apartheid, external policy every day more in favour of the reactionary LA regimes, etc.). Castro's policies undermine the workers' state; for political revolution to overthrow the Castro regime;; for a workers' council republic of Cuba.

- Solidarity with the progressive and anti-imperialist struggles of the people throughout the world; arms without strings for those struggles requesting it.

For the destruction of the capitalist state

The history of Latin America is rich with revolt, revolutionary upsurge and actual revolutions—Mexico, Bolivia, Cuba. But none of them have put the working class, organised in workers' councils, in control of the state. In Mexico and Bolivia, bourgeois nationalist regimes were obliged to carry out broad reforms by the masses. Other anti-imperialist caudillo's have done likewise. Once there—whether it be a Peron, a Velasco or an Ortega—they have disappointed or turned savagely upon the masses. They have compromised with the existing institutions of the capitalist state, its military high command, its imperialist backers, the church hierarchy and have tried only to moderate the state's oppression

of the people.

The weakness of all previous mass movements is that they have not found leaders or a party that trust only to the independent organisations of the struggle of the working class—workplace and barrio committees, soviets. Rather than take power totally into the hands of democratic and accountable mass organisations such as soviets the leaders of the masses have allowed power to pass into the hands of caudillos and bonapartes who promised they would act on behalf of the masses.

There has to be a conscious break with this reliance on false gods. The masses must give no political support to revolts of disaffected officers who, angered by their own loss of prestige and status and appalled by the social consequences of neo-liberalism, seek to impose an "enlightened despotism" over the people. However, a common action with them is possible where they seek to destroy a reactionary regime. So-called progressive military regimes cannot bring social justice and all its actions will inevitably come at the cost of curtailing or abolishing the limited democratic freedoms of the masses; freedoms which they must utilise to the full to expand their class consciousness and build their own independent organisations. any support for officers revolts must lead to a failure to agitate within the rank and file of the armed forces and to build independent militias of the workers. No support for military coups of any shade! For an independent working class road to power!

The weak and crisis ridden nature of capitalism in Latin America constantly gives rise to resistance that cannot be met by the ruling class without resort to bonapartist or even dictatorial restrictions upon bourgeois democracy; parliaments are often indirectly elected or their powers checked and balanced by Presidential powers. We demand an end to such restrictions and the abolition of the Presidency and of all second chambers, directly elected or not, which can only act as a check upon the pressure of the masses for radical change.

In addition to these demands, which form a constant part of our agitation and propaganda, it may be necessary on occasion to supplement them with the raising of the slogan for a sovereign and revolutionary constituent assembly. When the structure of political representation and the distribution of powers within the bourgeois state machine is thrown open to mass debate and struggle itself, where the ruling class attempt to forestall or limit the operation of representative democracy rights and where the masses have not yet become convinced of the need for workers' council power, then it may be necessary to demand the convocation of a sovereign constituent assembly. The aim of such demand must be to develop and activate the democratic aspirations of the masses to the fullest extent and in a revolutionary manner; the fight to convene such an assembly is not designed to perfect bourgeois democracy or to establish a necessary stage on the road to a workers' government but seeks to prevent the consolidation of either a bonapartist dictatorship or a stable bourgeois democratic regime.

Reactionary regimes, when they believe that the actual capitalist constitution places some limits on their plans to attack the working class and human rights, to privatise, etc., could propose new constituent assemblies (especially when they have a majority of the population behind them). In these circumstances revolutionaries should not help the reactionaries who want to take advantage of the weakness of the masses and their strength to change the constitution. Should such a reactionary constituent assembly be convened, revolutionaries must demand that they be elected democratically and should be sovereign.

Workers and Peasants' Government

The workers have to arm themselves permanently for self-defence and counter-attack. The level of armament will depend on concrete circumstances. The party should take a leading role in these actions which should be under rank and file trade union control. The leadership should be composed of

workers with proven military ability which means that the Bolshevik party must develop well trained military cadre. We fight to abolish the barracks system in the army. We are for trade union rights for the troops, the right to military instruction without sex discrimination, the right to elect officers and the defence of those who desert in the case of anti-working class repression. For soldiers' tribunals to punish corrupt officers. The rank and file and non commissioned officers are the sections of the army which can be won to the revolution. The commissioned officers and high command are counter-revolutionary.

We reject the military-political guerrilla party concept, the strategies of terrorism and the people's war. We also reject the politics of the coup. We defend anti-imperialist guerrilla movements against bourgeois repression. Our strategy is the armed insurrection of the working class and its allies.

A government that deserved even the critical support of the masses would have to base itself upon the fighting organisations of the workers and poor peasants. It would make itself accountable and recallable by councils of action. It would have to arm the masses in order to defeat the inevitable resistance of the military and bourgeoisie. Only such a government—whether it arose out of an insurrectionary movement from below or was the outcome of a parliamentary election—could be called a workers and peasants government. By the mobilisation of the masses it would have to make inroads into capitalism. Its immediate tasks would be;

- Expropriation of MNCs and domestic monopolies; nationalisation of the banks; maintenance of production on the basis of an emergency plan
- Dismantle the standing army and the special squads; arm the masses; recognise and legitimate the organisations of workers' control
- Establish workers' control in the industry, give lands to the poor peasants and cancel the external debt.

All power to workers' and poor peasants' councils!

All partial conquests of the working class in this or that city, this or that factory remain under threat of being destroyed by reaction until the masses smash the state machine that is the source and guarantee of that reaction. In short, the workers and poor peasants have to become the ruling class in the continent, have to destroy the political power of the capitalist class, break their bases of support in the imperialist institutions and MNCs. Until all power is vested solely in the institutions of proletarian democracy and repression—workers' councils and their militias—capitalist exploitation and oppression can be challenged and mitigated but not uprooted and destroyed.

The power of the working class lies in its role in the production and distribution of goods and services in society. The working class must become conscious of this power; it must base its political democracy upon this power and not dissolve it in the anonymity of the parliamentary ballot box where the worker dissolves his and her class independence into the featureless citizen, where the distinction between exploited and exploiter is lost. Only by fusing the political and economic power of the working class can it smash the capitalist state machine and become the new ruling class.

Socialist Federation of workers' republics of Latin America

Cuba and Nicaragua, each in their own way, demonstrate the price that must be paid if a national revolution remains isolated—by design or by default—from the revolutionary movements in the surrounding region. At least the call to revolution in the surrounding countries of the continent may

tie down the allies of the defeated capitalists and oligarchs and prevent an organised assault upon the successful revolution. At best, a series of successful revolutions in the continent opens up the possibility of an extended division of labour upon which to carry out the first stages of socialist construction in the form of a socialist federation of workers' republics.

Build a revolutionary party and international! Build the LRCI!

During the 1970s and 1980s the mass trade union, social and popular movements brought about great changes. Through their direct actions they succeeded in bringing down dictatorships, brought to power leftists or nationalists governments, established agrarian and social reforms later legalised by new governments. These movements have not been homogenous nor avoided successive waves of retreat and advance. But their greatest weakness is that they have failed to find a national united revolutionary focus that could not only destabilise the existing rulers and overthrow or throw back the military onto the defensive but also smash the capitalist state itself and establish a social revolution. Only in Cuba did the mass movement play even a subordinate role in the overthrow of capitalism and even here the mass social and industrial movements were politically expropriated and did not exercise political power themselves but delivered it up to a Stalinist caudillo.

The failure of the mass movements is reflected from the other side in that time and time again in the last twenty five years they have provided a platform for bourgeois and petit bourgeois parties or caudillos to climb the ladder into the state apparatus and then disappoint the aspirations of the masses.

History has proven beyond all doubt that the absence of a democratic and centralised Leninist-Trotskyist revolutionary party in all of the countries of the region is the reason that the mass movements of resistance did not lead to the overthrow of the existing state structures but only their temporary modification. Without such a party mass popular movements of revolt will continue, by their very existence, to condemn the social order of exploitation and oppression but will be unable to put an end to it. Without such a party and international the masses of Latin America will be condemned to cycles of advance and retreat, of insurrectionary revolt and heroic martyrdom, but will not smash the capitalist state—the very precondition for building a new social order.

In the last five years the FSLN and FMLN have abandoned or renounced the seizure of state power to bring mass social change. In the same period deep discredit has been heaped upon the idea of state direction of national life by Stalinism's collapse. Under the impact of these events an important section of the political vanguard in the continent is being miseducated into believing that the real object of struggle, the real revolutionary goal, is not state power at all, but the establishment of "political hegemony in civil society", of the creation of the "new model man and woman" through popular organisations.

This wretched philosophy is neo-liberalism's greatest ideological triumph and Stalinism's foulest legacy. It has opened up a greater gulf than ever in the last 25 years between the immediate struggles of the people and the conditions for their full satisfaction—the seizure of state power by the democratic and armed organisations of the workers and oppressed.

The project of building a mass revolutionary combat party in the mass struggles and within the trade union and popular organisations is the only answer to the politics of defeat; it is the most important question of our time.

Adopted by the International Executive Committee of the LEAGUE FOR A REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL (LRCI) in July 1993